

Witch Creek Schoolhouse (Julian Library)
Fourth & Washington Sts.
Julian
San Diego County
California

HABS No. CA-1972

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

WITCH CREEK SCHOOLHOUSE
(JULIAN LIBRARY)

HABS No. CA-1972

Location: Fourth and Washington Streets, Julian, San Diego County, California.

Present Owner: San Diego County

Present Use: Library

Significance: The Witch Creek School is one of the last surviving, and probably the most ambitious, of the numerous one-room schoolhouses constructed in San Diego County. Built from 1888-90, it served the Santa Ysabel School District until 1938, then the Julian Union District until 1954. It was moved to its current site for use as a library in 1971.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1888-90. (The date is based largely on the "Annual Report of the Public Schools," 1889-90, and, minutes of the Santa Ysabel District Board, November 4, 1889. On this date the Board ordered bonds to be issued totaling \$3,000. There is a later notice that construction costs amounted to \$2,742.21. It is presumed that this reference is to the construction of the schoolhouse).
2. Architect: Not known.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The Witch Creek School is located on Lots 5-8 and 17-20 of Block 7 of Julian Townsite. The land is owned by the County of San Diego. Originally the building was located at Witch Creek, Star Route, Ramona, California.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: There are no original plans known.
5. Alterations and additions: The building appears to have remained almost intact during the years of its use as a school. The moving of the building in 1971 required major rebuilding. Besides a new foundation and chimney, it was also necessary to replace much of the trim and siding lumber. The wood shingling of the roof was completely replaced, and the cupola was rebuilt.

- B. Historical Context: The Witch Creek School was constructed for the Santa Ysabel School District, its name derived from a town that was laid out but never developed. The Santa Ysabel District was formed in 1888 ("Annual Report of the Public Schools" 1888-1889. In later directories, for reasons which are not apparent, the formation of the

district is given as 1880). The school served the district from the date of its construction until 1938, when the Santa Ysabel District was absorbed into the Julian Union District. The school was used until 1954. The last class had 20 students grades 1-8, taught by a single teacher.

Prepared by: Robert Bruegmann
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Summer, 1975

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A small, Queen-Anne style building that is among the most elaborate of the many one-room schoolhouses that were built in San Diego County.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The one-story school measures 34'-6" x 42'-10". It is irregular in shape, and has reading room and restroom additions.
2. Foundations: As the school has been moved it sits on new concrete foundations with original wood skirting. Interior loads are carried by 4 x 4 posts to the concrete footings.
3. Wall construction: (From restoration drawings). The walls are wood frame, with flush siding with recessed joints. The school is painted beige with dark brown trim.
4. Structural system, framing: The floor joists rest on a 4" x 6" girder which then transmits the load to the earth through 4" x 4" posts and 8" x 12" x 12" pier blocks. The ceiling has 2" x 6" joists, some of which were doubled during the moving and restoration process.
5. Porches: The front porch is located at the north corner with the front doors located on the diagonal. The porch roof is hipped and is supported on three columns and the building wall. Shallow wood arches span between the columns. The arched spandrels are paneled and have keystones.
6. Chimney: The one exterior chimney is located on the SW elevation. It is brick, covered with stucco.

7. Openings:

- a. Doorways: The main entry is composed of a double front door with two tiers of molded panels. The top panels are glazed. The rear door in the SE elevation has been moved from the south to the east corner to accommodate a ramp from the parking lot.
- b. Windows: The NE elevation has five windows, four of which have double-hung, one-over-one sash with transoms. The storage room has a two-light horizontal, hinged window. The NW elevation has three windows, two double-hung, one-over-one, transomed windows; and one window for the restrooms, similar to the storage room window. The SW elevation has six (two sets of three) double-hung, one-over-one, transomed windows. Trim is plain with a projecting molding at the top.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The roof is hipped, and covered with new cedar shingles. The reading room has a 6-sided pyramidal roof.
- b. Cornice: The cornice is built up with several bands of molding, but with no overhang.
- c. Belfry: The belfry is supported by, and centered on the porch roof. It has a convex-curved roof, topped by an iron finial. The roof rests on an open belfry with slender columns at each corner.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The structure is essentially a one room schoolhouse with a corner entry. The boys' and girls' toilets are located to the right of the entry. The girls' is entered from the entry space, the boys' from the main school room. There is a storage and utility room opposite the girls' rest room, to the left of the entry. A reading room is located on the NE side. It is a six-sided space with windows located in the two wall which are at 45 degrees to the main structure.
2. Flooring: Replaced.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls have new plaster-on-wood lath. Tongue-and-groove wainscoting rises to the height of the window sills. The plaster, wainscoting, and tongue-and-groove ceiling are all painted white. A concave molding strip marks the junction of the walls and ceilings. The wainscoting is higher in the boys' rest room and storage room, rising to a height of 5'-4".

4. Doorways and doors: Doors and windows have identical trim. There is a plain, flat molding below the lintel. All side trims are plain. The doors have two tiers of molded panels.
 5. Hardware: Decorative butt hinges are on the boys' rest room and reading room doors.
 6. Mechanical equipment: An old wood burning stove is connected to the chimney.
- D. Site: The school/library has been moved to a site part way up a hill on a leveled site. A cut has been made in the hill to the south to provide ample room for the asphalt parking lot.

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Summer, 1975

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Architectural drawings:

Restoration plans: There are 5 sheets of drawings executed by San Diego County's architectural division at the time the building was moved to Julian. They are titled "Julian County Park, Relocate and restore Witch Creek School" and are dated February-March 1971. They show the building in a restored condition but indicate by notes what work was planned. These sheets include site and foundation plans, floor plan and framing details, interior and exterior elevations, ramp details, and electrical and heating plans.

B. Early Views: The following photographs are found at the Julian Library:

1. Photograph of the building in its original site looking toward the front porch.
2. Photograph of the building on its original site looking toward the rear of the building.
3. Photograph of students standing on the porch of the school, (dated 1898 in ink on the photograph margin, names of the students are also noted).
4. Series of photographs in a large frame showing building soon after constructed and views while the building was being moved in 1970 (a total of 10 photographs).

Photograph of the structure shortly after construction. (In the collection of the Title Insurance Company, Negative number 20109.) This photograph has been reproduced as HABS No. CA-1972-1 for this documentation.

C. Bibliography:

"Annual Report of the Public Schools," San Diego County School District, for 1888-1889 school years is filed in the Office of the County's Superintendent of Schools, 6401 Linda Vista Road, San Diego.

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